

CS455 - Senior Project **User's Manual Guidelines**

The purpose of this requirement is to encourage you to provide your sponsor and other users with clear and complete instructions on how to *install*, *use*, and *administer* your project's product. This section assumes that your product consists primarily of software.

If your project is of a different nature, then you will need to modify the content and structure of the users' manual appropriately. However, keep in mind that the purpose of this assignment is to explain how to use the product effectively.

The user-level documentation will likely be examined by more individuals from more diverse backgrounds than the other project documents. Thus try to identify the possible user communities for your product and organize the documentation appropriately for those users. Write clearly. Avoid unnecessary jargon. Define any specialized terms you use. State any assumptions you make. Provide the documentation in a useful format. In general you should provide the documentation in a format suitable for online display (e.g., in an HTML format) and as well as in printed form.

System Requirements:

The user's manual must explain all the hardware and software requirements required to install and run the software

System Deployment:

The users' manual should explain how to configure and install your project's product on a Computer system. As appropriate, describe how to compile and link the software. Be sure to document any assumptions about any dependencies on other software packages, libraries, files, specialized hardware components, etc. Explain how to deploy your project's files (executables, libraries, configuration files, etc.) on a user's computer system. Describe how to use any installation and configuration scripts (e.g., batch files) you provide as a part of your system. Similarly, you might need to describe how to uninstall the software from a system.

System Operation by users and administrators:

The users' manual should also explain how to administer your project's product once installed. Explain what the administrator of the product (or of the computer system that hosts it) must do to keep the product operating smoothly and reliably. If you provided an administrator or "super user" mode, then describe the user interface and functionality of the commands associated with that mode. For example, how are users enabled and disabled from using the product? Once installed, what configuration changes (if any) are supported? What files (if any) should be backed-up regularly? And so forth.

Of course, the most important audience of the users' manual is probably the group of Ordinary users. Be sure to describe the user interface structure and functionality clearly.

Keep in mind that some users of your product may be inexperienced or unsophisticated Computer users or may not have the opportunity to be trained on use of your product.

Documentation for these novice users may need to be somewhat tutorial in nature. Other users may be more experienced and sophisticated, but may use your product infrequently.

These more sophisticated users need to refer to the documentation to answer specific "how to" questions quickly.

You may also want to include a section in the user documentation that discusses how to enhance and extend the product and suggests possible enhancements.